

Castillo de San Marcos & Fort Matanzas National Monuments



Historic Black Powder Weapons Safety Regulations

By their nature, any time weapons are used – with or without black powder – there is an increased risk of injury. Park staff and living historians are acutely aware of this and share both the concern and the responsibility for safe practices. Many living history groups hold their members to high safety standards and the NPS depends upon a strong, consistently demonstrated commitment to safety for any person or group involved in a park event. Ultimately, though, it is the National Park Service that is responsible for the safety of an event.

All firing demonstrations will be done according to National Park Service Historic Weapons safety regulations, under the direct supervision of a certified NPS Historic Weapons Safety Officer who will have the final say on the conduct of all historic weapons firing demonstrations. Safety is our primary concern, and our common goal.

Before an individual or Outside Group can participate in a living history event involving historic black powder weapons at Castillo de San Marcos & Fort Matanzas National Monument, all must be instructed on the below listed regulations and sign and return the last page of this Historic Weapons Firing Agreement.

Acceptable Weapon Types

Only reproduction firearms may be used at the park. ***The use of original firearms is prohibited.***

Reproduction small arms that **will** be allowed are:

- 18th century flintlock muskets
- Matchlocks
- Blunderbusses
- Percussion-cap weapons (*only for special events planned in advance*)
 - 1853 British Enfield rifled musket
 - 1861 Springfield rifled musket

Reproduction small arms that **will not** be allowed are:

- Revolvers (*can not be fired but used for interpretive purposes only*)
- Pistols (*can not be fired but used for interpretive purposes only*)

Anyone who brings any other prohibited weapon on site will be asked to return the weapon to his/her vehicle, or have it held by the NPS and returned after the event.



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Weapon Safety, the Public, and You

To ensure the safety of participants and our visitors, a high degree of firearm discipline is expected of each and every participant.

- All weapons will remain under physical control of its owner at all times.
- No weapon is to be left unattended.
- Visitors are not allowed to handle or touch a loaded weapon.
- Visitors may touch an unloaded weapon so long as the owner maintains physical control of it. DO NOT HAND YOUR WEAPON TO VISITORS.
- Participants under the age of 16 may not handle weapons (firearms or edged weapons).
- NEVER point your weapon (firearm or edged weapon) at anyone at anytime.

Appropriate Drill Manuals

Appropriate drill manuals will be used by all participants handling/demonstrating historic weapons in the park. Acceptable manuals are: ***NPS modified***

- 1728 Spanish Infantry Drill
- Spanish 1735 Garrison Cannon Drill
- Von Steuben's
- 1762 British Drill
- Hardee's Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics

Ammunition

Unless otherwise stated for a specific event, or prior arrangements have been made with the park's Historic Weapons Supervisor, do not bring any black powder with you into the park. If such arrangements have been made, the following criteria will apply:

All black powder brought into NPS areas by outside individuals or groups must be in the form of prepared cartridges, is subject to inspection by NPS, and be under NPS control when not actually in use during a demonstration. Bulk or loose black powder is absolutely prohibited. Cannon Cartridges and Powder will always be provided by NPS.

- Musket Cartridge construction will be of sturdy paper only. Use of staples or tape is prohibited.
- Maximum charges are as follows: 18th Century Muskets 125 grains FFG
 - 60 grains FFG for 19th Century Muskets
- The use of FFFG powder is prohibited for anything other than cannon primers
- Unused cartridges will be collected after each demonstration.
- Powder contained in powder horns is strictly prohibited.
- Participants under age 16 may not handle powder.

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Inspections

All small arms used in firing demonstrations will be inspected by the NPS to ensure serviceability of the weapon, and then just prior to and immediately after every firing demonstration to ensure the weapon is clear.

Weapons that fail inspection may not be carried. The owner must return the weapon to his/her vehicle or it will be secured by the NPS and returned at the end of the event.

All weapons must meet the following standards to pass inspection:

1. secured flashguard and hammer stall – *Flintlocks*
2. no cracks or splits in the stock
3. furniture and barrel fit securely to stock
4. no missing stock pins or screws
5. lock works smoothly
6. half-cock position works properly
7. flint is secured by leather or lead - *Flintlocks*
8. steel and spring are in good condition - *Flintlocks*
9. barrel free from visible dents or cracks
10. no excessive rust or corrosion on the barrel, lock and touch hole
11. no fouling in the barrel or on the lock
12. No carbon buildup inside or around the Cone – *Caplocks*
13. Clean Vent

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Firing Procedures

- . All firing demonstrations taking place on park property may only be done under the direct supervision of a certified NPS Historic Weapons safety officer.
- . For protection from flash burns, all demonstrators firing black powder firearms will wear natural fiber, long-sleeved outer garments or full uniforms as appropriate to their historical impression.
- . **Hearing protection must be worn during demonstration by all who are firing historic weapons. No exceptions.**
 - . Cannon crew members must wear proper hand protection. *ie. welder gauntlets*
 - . Safety Glasses are optional
 - . Range safety standards will be observed at all times. Firing will commence or cease at the discretion of the supervising NPS Historic Weapons safety officer.

Misfire Procedures - *Flintlocks*

Failure to spark:

1. Call out “misfire” and hold the musket in the firing position for **10 seconds** to make sure there is no hang fire.
2. Return to the priming position
3. Check priming and flint. Wipe down the steel. If working with the flint, attach the hammer stall and dump priming.
4. Re-prime if necessary
5. Return to the shoulder position and continue the firing procedure when ordered to do so by your company officer.

Flash in the pan:

1. Call out “misfire” and hold the musket in the firing position for **10 seconds** to make sure there is no hang fire.
2. Return to the priming position
3. Half-cock the piece, and reattach the hammer stall.
4. Pick out the touch-hole, wipe off the steel and flint and re-prime.
5. Return to the shoulder position and continue the firing procedure when ordered to do so by your company officer.

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Misfire Procedures – *Percussion Caps*

1. Call out “misfire” and hold the musket in the firing position for **10 seconds** to make sure there is no hang fire.
2. Return to the priming position
3. Half-cock the piece
4. Pick out the Cone using a vent pick
5. Re-prime
6. Return to the shoulder position and continue the firing procedure when ordered to do so by your company officer.

If, after following these procedures, the weapon still misses fire, you may retry ONLY two more times. If the weapon still will not fire, remove primer and turn it over to the Historic Weapons Safety Officer.

Cannon Misfire:

Demonstration comes to an end and Historic Weapons safety officer follows necessary procedures to make the weapon safe.

Edged Weapons

. Edged weapons (swords, bayonets, knives, hatchets, spontoons, halberds etc.) may be drawn and brandished in a safe and prudent manner, when the bearer and the weapon are behind a barrier in a secure area out of the reach of visitors, i.e. officers carrying swords during the tactical demonstration, or infantrymen in a bayonet demonstration).

. At no time may participants engage in simulated combat with real or simulated edged weapons.

. When not behind a barrier, out amongst visitors, swords, knives, bayonets and the like may not be fully drawn. They may be partially drawn enough to expose some of the blade for visual inspection for interpretive purposes, but no visitor may touch the blade.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Soldiers on sentry duty may fix bayonets but must keep the musket in a vertical position and the bearer must maintain control of the weapon.**
- Soldiers may NOT walk with bayonet attached to musket.**
- Soldiers may NOT walk/march with a loaded musket.**
- At no time may muskets be fired with bayonet attached.**

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Historic Black Powder Weapons Firing Agreement

Before an individual or Outside Group can participate in a living history event involving historic black powder weapons at Castillo de San Marcos & Fort Matanzas National Monument, all must be instructed on the above listed regulations and sign this Historic Weapons Firing Agreement, which includes a copy of the Historic Black Powder Weapons Safety Regulations. This agreement must be signed and returned to the event Historic Weapons Safety Officer by mail, fax, or in person, prior to participation.

Mail the completed agreement to:

Historic Weapons Supervisor
1 South Castillo Drive
St. Augustine, FL
32084

Or fax to: (904) 471-7605

Participant's or Group's Name _____

Mailing Address: _____

City / State / Zip: _____

Telephone: (home) _____ (work) _____ (cell) _____

Email: _____

How many participants? _____

In signing this agreement, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Historic Black Powder Weapons Safety Regulations and comply with them fully.

Participant or Commander Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Historic Weapons Supervisor

_____ Date: _____